الحس التراجيدي في رواية جاتسبي العظيم وقصة بيبي لون ري فيزيتد لسكوت فيتزجيرالد

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تتطرق هذه الدراسة لعملين مختارين للمؤلف الأمريكي سكوت فيتزجيرالد تجري أحداثهما في عشرينيات القرن العشرين في الولايات المتحدة. تقدم هذه الدراسة قراءة نقدية للعملين في ظل نظرية المأساة الجديدة المختلفة في عناصرها ومفاهيمها عن النظرية الأرسطية التراجيدية الكلاسيكية من حيث الأسلوب و طبيعة الحبكة و الخصائص. حيث يتم التطرق في هذه الدراسة للتناقض القائم بين الحس التراجيدي في هذين العملين وغياب الحقيقة المطلقة في نقد ما بعد الحداثة وحلول المعاني التي يولدها القراء من النص.

يقدم هذا البحث روح المأساة من منظور ما بعد حداثي مستخدما مصطلحات ما بعد الحداثة في قراءة العملين موضع البحث من حيث شخصيات العملين والبيئة التي يدور فيها الحدث لبيان أن الحس التراجيدي في هذين العملين ليس نتيجة لتغير الظروف الاقتصادية أو الاجتماعية للبطل أو سقوطه ، وإنما هو نتيجة لاستحالة ثبات المركز الذي من خلاله يمكن حكم القارئ المعاصر على السلوك البشري لتعدد المعنى واختلاف تفسيره.

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study of the deconstructive attitude in both works has striven to give meaning to the complex oxymoron of both tales in which characters, places and relationships are equated with two sets of opposite values respectively and interchangeably with the result of the tragic negation of these positive attributes as well as the tragic negation even of stable negative qualities. Characters are both ideal and vile as are relationships and places. The result is the uncertainty of meaning or values by which characters can be judged. The existence of the multiplicity of meanings is the new form of tragedy which can be reached from a deconstructive reading of the two works. Thus, both the novel and the short story contain an unstable deconstructive reconstructive presentation of action, place, character and relationships which creates a terrible tragic effect. The works are tragically void of any center of reference whether moral, or religious to give absolute final meanings to the characters and their experiences within the text. All presences of being are continually deferred and negated. This is the postmodern sense of tragedy which is the metamorphosis of Aristotelian tragedy in the postmodern age.

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anymore after she knows how he makes his money and masterly realizes there is no danger in leaving them together.

Tom, however, is again destructed as he is compared to Wilson, whom he stops at to take gas. Wilson is maddened by discovering that his wife has a secret life, just as Tom is maddened when he discovers that Daisy loves Gatsby. However, Tom unlike Wilson is sure Daisy will return to him, but Wilson is sure Myrtle will runaway and lock herself up in her room. Tom is also constructed in the ways he deals with Wilson and Daisy, supporting them both. He stops by Wilson, supports him and even has cunning and composure enough to tell him that Gatsby owns the yellow car. Tom even shows genuine emotion when he cries for Myrtle (116). He is destructed when it is revealed that he told Wilson the yellow car was Gatsby's, yet he is again reconstructed when at the end Nick discovers that Daisy never told Tom that she was the one driving not Gatsby (146). Thus, tragically, like Lorraine and Duncan, we cannot judge Tom or his actions. Should we condemn him or excuse him? This uncertainty leads to the tragic conception of life.

The Great Gatsby and "Babylon Revisited" thus clearly reveal Fitzgerald's obsession with form as they possess parallel use of places, characterization, and relationships. Moreover, both works reveal Fitzgerald's obsession with America and the Americans. This detailed

scale Tom takes Nick to see his girl. Tom sees Wilson, Myrtle's husband, as dumb and uses him to the end. He takes his wife and makes him murder Daisy's lover. Tom buys Myrtle what she wants, but dupes her into thinking that what prevents Tom from leaving Daisy is that Daisy is a catholic and he cannot divorce her. Tom the brute force is being built. Myrtle may sincerely love him and be willing to leave her husband to marry him, but he is only enjoying himself. He ends his destruction line with breaking Myrtle's nose for mentioning Daisy's name. This act, while deconstructing him as brutal and his love for Myrtle as faulty, shows how he views Daisy as pure and cannot stand her name to be mentioned in the contaminated air of Fifth Avenue.

Tom is, then, constructed as Daisy remembers how she married him and fell in love with him. Tom, like Duncan and Lorraine, has a positive side in his love of his wife and sincere wish to provide for his wife and daughter. Yet, instantaneously he is again destructed as he is found with a girl just after his honeymoon. Tom goes to Gatsby's party but only to doubt Gatsby's source of fortune and gather girls' addresses. Yet, Tom is again reconstructed as he is then seen in his house discussing science and theories he read about. These ideas, however, are clearly racist and protective of the white race. His wisdom, like Lorraine's and Duncan's who track Charlie down, is diabolical. He is very clever in showing how Gatsby got his money. He is confident and has faith in how Daisy will not accept Gatsby

The tragic Daisy tries to reconstruct her marriage and travels with Tom. She does not come to Gatsby's funeral, or send a flower. Daisy and Tom destructively "smashed up things and creatures and then retreated back into their money or their vast carelessness, or whatever it was that kept them together and let other people clean up the mess they had made" (146). It might be argued that Daisy and her husband are representative of the upper-class Americans during the early years of the twentieth century whose major aim was to live the life of the American Dream and wealth by any means without paying attention to values. However, the tragedy is not in what Daisy did to Gatsby, but our inability to find a center with which to judge Daisy and her actions. She is constructed, only to be deconstructed again.

Tom, like Daisy, is continually constructed and reconstructed again as is his relation with Myrtle. This repetition of construction and reconstruction strengthens the tragic tone in the novel. Tom may be said to resemble the Lorraine and Duncan of "Babylon Revisited." He is the agent of destruction which foils Gatsby's plans and shows Gatsby as a criminal. He like Daisy is much more developed and comes to represent aristocracy, vice, irresponsibility as well as progressive scientific thinking which is totally racist. Tom is first constructed as the football hero who has the elaborate Georgian Colonial house full of tradition and culture. Yet, he has "a cruel body", and a "gruff" and "husky" voice (8). He is drawn here as brute force and later on as oppressive progress. Continuing on such destructive

Daisy returns to Tom and they sit in their kitchen with "natural intimacy". She is nodding and agreeing to Tom's plan on the best to do to make Gatsby pay for Myrtle's murder. The great Daisy is totally deconstructed as she conspires with her brute husband against her true romantic lover. Nevertheless, Tom and Daisy's relation is reconstructed as they discover how they truly love and belong to each other. It is Gatsby who doesn't realize that his relation to Daisy was an illusion. But there is still the possibility that their dream could have come true if Daisy could be brave enough to stand and say the truth. This is the complexity of the characterization in the novel. Daisy is much more idealized and her real corruption is much clearer than Helen's making the end more tragic and the moral presences and differences more deep.

In a deconstructive manner, Gatsby is "watching over nothing" (119). She is not upstairs and has locked herself in her room. Yet, the Daisy of Gatsby's dream remains alive for him as he heroically does not go away, or run, but stays and dies to take the blame for her crime. He has lived for her and dies for her. Is this construction, or destruction? Gatsby builds the Daisy of his dreams, the Daisy he tricked into thinking that he was of her class, the magical Daisy with whom he built a dream, and the Daisy who was confused and could not take a decision when he left her and Tom came and made the decision for her. This is Gatsby's dream of Daisy which the real Daisy has only some of but is not and cannot rise to such innocence.

Daisy appears with Tom at one of his parties. Daisy is again offended as Tom takes down names and addresses of girls. Yet, she is reconstructed as Gatsby reconstructs his house and lifestyle when he senses at the party that Daisy does not approve of all this extravagance. Gatsby, however, laments that Daisy doesn't understand that he did all this to get her there. "She doesn't understand but she used to understand" (90). Gatsby tries to reconstruct Daisy and his relation with her from the day he knew her to understand why now she doesn't understand him. He finds that he had lost everything and chose his Daisy, but not this Daisy. The mind is never the same again. (91).

Thus, the real Daisy is now uncovered. Does she really love Gatsby and will leave Tom and his brutality? Does she really love Tom with all his faults and goes to Gatsby to spite Tom? Does she love Gatsby, but is a prisoner of her situation and class and cannot free herself from the reality around her? Till the end we are uncertain. Daisy is seen on the hottest day of summer getting rid of her husband and kissing Gatsby (95). Her voice beats against the heat of her situation and she defiantly goes away with Gatsby. Nevertheless, she can't say she doesn't love Tom too (108). She is happy when Gatsby proves he was at Oxford, but shuns when Gatsby cannot deny he works with Meyer Wolfshiem selling grain alcohol and betting (109). Thus, going with Gatsby has lost all its grandeur. It is a deconstructed act of heroism. Gatsby cannot be the hero and Daisy cannot defend him.

cannot help always needing a mistress for himself. Thus, Daisy is cherished and slighted with the same action. Daisy is reconstructed and deconstructed when Tom takes Myrtle as a mistress but hits Myrtle for mentioning Daisy's name and cannot bear his wife's name to be mentioned by his mistress who cheats on her husband.

Daisy, then, is constructed as the innocent girl who fell in love with the sincere Lieutenant, Jay Gatsby, who had nothing but his heart and good looks. She writes him letters and waits for him but finally she is destructively won over by Tom and his pearl necklace. She does get drunk for the first time in her life on her wedding day holding Gatsby's letter, but she ends up married to Tom and mad about him. With his head on her lap and rubbing her fingers over his eyes and looking at him with unfathomable delight (64), she seems to have a perfect relationship and have forgotten the dream of her life with Gatsby. Yet, destruction comes again as Tom runs around with other girls (64).

Just like her voice which ripples up and down (70), her character is continually constructed and reconstructed. She goes to see Gatsby and lured by the mention of his name by Jordan and Nick. She overviews the house and is delighted with Gatsby and wants to put him on a cloud and push him (77). Nevertheless, Gatsby realizes that the real Daisy is human and earth-bound, extremely short of the colossal vitality of his illusion (79).

taste from what she has suffered from? Is she the weak irresponsible human who cannot take blame for her actions? Is she the golden innocent girl of Gatsby's dream? We are left in infinite supplements of uncertainties, to echo a Derridian terminology. Daisy is a much more developed than Helen. She is very present and her voice rings and is very characteristic. Her daughter unlike Helen's Honoria is only three and she is the main idealized heroine. Nevertheless, she, like Helen, is tragically deconstructive.

Daisy is first constructed as the second cousin of Nick, the girl who had married Tom and come East to settle for good. She is described with a ballooning dress and surrounded by food imagery of cakes and white pink frosting and vine rug (9). She is larger than life. Her voice is enticing and exciting "full of money as Gatsby later calls it" (98). As Whitney Scott describes the voices of the Midwest Rich, which were symbols of their characters, as "the supremely confident, almost arrogant, moneyed tones of America's elite" (Scott III). Her murmur makes people come closer to hear more. She is described as the helpless wife and mother married to the "gruff", "husky" "brute" (8, 12). This vision is destructed as she hysterically collapses when Tom goes to answer Myrtle's phone call. She makes fun of this picture of her and laughs at her "sophistication" calling herself a "sad", "hopeless" "fool" (16). Daisy is again constructed in a deconstructive way as Tom lies to Myrtle that Daisy is Catholic and he cannot get a divorce. Tom constructively loves Daisy and cannot leave her, but he

Gatsby wants too much of Daisy. Tom has found him out as a "Common swindler". The deconstructive scale which began with Gatsby introducing Nick to Wolfshiem is complete. This is the supplement of the American dream which pulls it down. Gatsby accomplished his money by illegal deals. Daisy may have loved him before, given him the eternal kiss, yet that was in the past. Now, he as Jay Gatsby is broken against Tom's malice. People guessed at his corruption and Tom has proven he is corrupted. Meaning, however, transient, tragic and deconstructive tries to evolve as reconstructively his corruption was for Daisy, for an incorruptible dream (126). As Gatsby holds his vigil in front of Daisy's house, he waits for nothing. Daisy had loved Tom, still loves him, has a girl by him, conspires with him and is of Tom's secret club. Gatsby's Daisy is a "ghost" (132). She does not come to his funeral. No one comes to his funeral except his illusioned father and naïve Nick. Even Wolfshiem could not come. Gatsby and his dream are tragically destroyed and we can not ascertain if he was hero or naïve villain.

In Daisy's Character we can also discern the tragic consequence of the deconstructive trend in the work. Daisy is continually constructed and reconstructed as is her relationship with Gatsby and with Tom that by the end of the novel there is a total deconstructive uncertainty to the possible meaning of her character: Is she the weak lover who was forced to forget her romantic dream? Is she the betrayed wife who is justified to try to make her husband

fell to pieces" (54). The only truth is that Gatsby is trying to forget something happened in the past. Also, Gatsby cannot yet face Tom; he leaves the dinner once he sees Tom there.

Nevertheless, Gatsby is again reconstructed as having a purpose in all his parties which is to get Daisy back. Jordan relates the story of Gatsby and Daisy and Gatsby is reconstructed as he prepares his house to entertain Daisy. Yet, Gatsby is nervous. He does not sleep. There is something wrong. Destruction begins as he sees "Daisy" humbled short of his dreams because of the colossal vitality of his illusion (79). The deconstructive scale continues as Gatsby's real history is uncovered. He has humble beginnings yet the scale reverts and Gatsby is reconstructed as the epitome of the American Dream building him from nothing. He becomes the Great Gatsby. Yet, he did all this not by knowledge, calling or sport, but by sinister Cody's help who educated Gatsby how to gain wealth quickly.

Is Gatsby the American Dream? He gains confidence from his ascent and is able now to tell Tom that he knows his wife (84). He is not shy of him. Yet, deconstruction looms when Tom intends to investigate Gatsby and discover how he got his money. Gatsby naively thinks that Daisy will tell Tom that she never loved him. Accordingly, they will be getting married in Louisville as they should have done many years ago (90). Daisy may come to him in the evenings. She may ride with him to New York. She may defy Tom. She may be the Golden Girl. Yet, Gatsby is not the prince.

reconstructive trend Gatsby possesses a smile described as: "It was one of those rare smiles with a quality of eternal reassurance in it that you may come across four or five times in life. It faced -or seemed to face- the whole external world for an instant" (40). This was before his dream was shattered. He naively "seems" to know the entire world. Gatsby is an Oxford man. Nevertheless, no one believes him (41) and as it turns out he went for one year on a scholarship after the war. His guests feel there is something sinister about him and at the end of every party there is some sort of destruction of the evening and the host people go home, drunk and fighting and Gatsby, is overcome by: "A sudden emptiness seemed to flow now from the windows and the great doors, endowing with complete isolation the figure of the host, who stood on the porch, his hand up in a formal gesture of farewell. (47)

Construction, reconstruction, and destruction tragically leave nothing of Gatsby. "Gatsby is a figure who problematizes the nature of figuration itself, drawing the text towards an object void" (Will, I). He is "a deconstructive figure" (Will II). As Will stresses the work gives "two discrepant views of its protagonist" (Will I). Gatsby tries to reconstruct himself to Nick to use him to get Daisy over to his house. Gatsby says, "'I'll tell you God's truth'. His right hand suddenly ordered divine retribution to stand by" (53). Yet, when Gatsby claims to be educated at Oxford as a family tradition, all falls apart, the scale moves to deconstruction "And with this doubt, his whole statement

> describe Gatsby's desire for Daisy Buchanan and that of the first American colonists gazing at "the fresh green breast of the new world.... What matters to Gatsby is what matters to "us"; Gatsby's story is "our" story; his fate and the fate of the nation are intertwined. That Gatsby "turned out all right in the end" is thus essential to the novel's vision of a transcendent and collective Americanism. (Will 126)

Gatsby is, then, shown as constructively yearning for the green light in the distance across the bay.

However; Gatsby is also constructed as weak, mysterious and relying on dreams. He does not go away when Nick sees him yearning for the light but is said to have "vanished" (19), as his dream will. This study argues the total effect of the novel is tragic because of the transience of its hero. Barbara Will, however, argues that this transience is positive in helping to make us forget Gatsby's failings and acquaint him with glorious America. When Gatsby is, then, mentioned by people at his own parties, he is totally deconstructed, accused of murdering a man causing people to fear him (28). Nevertheless, Gatsby is described by his "neighbor", Nick, as warm and feeling who gives a new evening gown to the girl who tore her gown at his party (36). Gatsby also has real books in his library. However, he is never shown reading them, but it is Tom who is constantly discussing new ideas he gets from books. In the

shall ever find again. No Gatsby turned out all right at the end." (4) Nick is the one who believes in Gatsby and tries to find people to follow Gatsby's funeral. Yet, he is constructed as unable to discern the naivety of Gatsby's wish to bring back the past. Nick loses his stability and presence when Gatsby dies. He loses Jordan who was in his hands and waiting for him. He himself is as naïve as Gatsby and unable to understand and fathom human nature and learn from experience. Nick is continually constructed and reconstructed in a manner which causes us to lose faith in any center of consciousness in the work.

Gatsby, however; and his relation with Daisy is the best example of the deconstructive tendency in the novel. Gatsby is first mentioned as: "represent[ing] everything for which [Nick] has an unaffected scorn". Yet, he is "gorgeous" and "turned out all right at the end" (4). Construction and deconstruction is the method in which Gatsby is presented leading to tragic inability to judge him. As Tony Tanner puts it, "Gatsby certainly looms—looms and fades, looms and fades—through Nick's history" (Tanner xix). Trilling acquaints him with America and its yearning for perfection; Gatsby "comes inevitably to stand for America itself" (1963, 17).

Moreover, Barbara Will stresses:

> Nick sees Gatsby as the incarnation of this national impulse, this "extraordinary gift for hope," using the same term "wonder" to

the same time these forces construct him as he strives to evaluate Gatsby. Nick had a history in the Middle West, but he leaves it and goes east. His aunts and uncles, his clan, decide for him. Yet, he leaves them and lives in the East alone. He may be reconstructed as reliable and finally finding a place and belonging to the East when a man asks him for directions and he responds knowingly, but he is represented as living thriftily in the proximity of millionaires.

He is again constructed as being sincere and feeling for Daisy and hoping she runs out of the house with her daughter to end her unhappy situation. Yet, he unfaithfully goes with Tom to see Myrtle and her sister, has dinner, drinks for the second time in his life and does not tell Daisy. There is no moral centre of conscience; all is on the scale of construction and destruction. Nick acts in a deconstructive way, as both presence and absence. We are constantly asked to defer our judgment of him, to be able to accept his view of the tale. The striving for meaning, thus, becomes tragic in its instability.

Nick is attracted to Jordan, although he knows that she has cheated as a sport. Nick, however; is constructed as the believer in Gatsby, the one who writes to tell Gatsby's tale, the one who affords hope by cherishing the memory of Gatsby. It is he who sees Gatsby as having: "an extra ordinary gift for hope, a romantic readiness such as I have never found any other person and which it is not likely I

and thereby prevents, in a deconstructive manner, any stable meaning from remaining in the work.

Like the places, the characters and their relationships are also destroyed leading to a lack of stable centers of faith or morality, a lack of presence and a multitude of abjects, ending in a sense of tragic instability. Nick Carraway, the first-person narrator, is constructed at first as he relates how he accepts his father's advice not to be tolerant and not to judge anyone. This makes him tolerant and opens many curious natures to him. Nevertheless, it also makes him "the victim of not a few veteran bores" (3). Can we as readers rely on him, or is he seeing too much, or too little? His reliability as a narrator is uncertain. We are not sure what is true and what is misunderstood. He is shown as moral and wanting all to be right (3-4). As McCay points out Nick only "seems" to understand more deeply (McCay 63). As Barbara Will stresses Nick poses the moral backbone of the tale as he tries to whitewash Gatsby's character (Will 125). As a focus of consciousness, he is much more developed than Marion in "Babylon Revisited" who also plays the moralizing agent of Charlie's tale. In the short story, however; Marion is clearly antagonistic but undermined by her selfish motivations, while in the novel Nick becomes an intrinsic part of the total form of the work defying significance and creating meaning from meaninglessness; Derrida (1977) acknowledges how speech does not have to represent something to have a meaning. Nick is constructed only through the constructions of the other characters and at

two bottles of ale. Tom has told Wilson, the yellow car is Gatsby's and Daisy does not acknowledge she was driving even to Tom. Gatsby is betrayed and he thinks he is sacrificing for his dream girl who will never forget him. The kitchen scene shatters the "rather distinguished secret society to which [Daisy and Tom] belonged" (17) of which West Egg and their house was a symbol. Thus, the tragic sense arises from the instability caused by this deconstruction of Tom and Daisy's East Egg residence.

Between West Egg and East Egg resides the main element of tragedy and destruction. It is similar to what Julia Kristeva terms "the abject": that which "draws me toward the place where meaning collapses" (1982, 2). The valley of the ashes and Eckleburg's eyes stand for reality, unlike Hawkes, who believes that the eyes bend and distort reality (Hawkes 23). They show the reality of Tom, the folly of man who has a dream wife and cannot live without a mistress whom he despises. They are ashes, killing all. Myrtle who resides there breaks down Tom when we see who he really is, Daisy when she kills Myrtle and betrays Gatsby and Gatsby when he is accused of killing Myrtle and murdered by her husband. She uncovers their realities and ends their dreams. Daisy is as selfish as Tom when she kills Myrtle and does not save Gatsby. Tom is shown as a selfish brutish unfaithful husband. Gatsby is shown as a naïve simpleton living in unattainable dreams. All fall to ashes, to nothingness; the valley embodies the deconstructive scale in the work. This deconstructive attitude leads to "the abject,"

This collapse of the dream and the stress that the green light can never be reached is the source of the tragic sense which constructs and then deconstructs and is never stable and concrete. Unlike Hawkes who believes that the book is positive and gives the hope of reconstructing ones dreams, this essay argues that the work is quite negative and tragic because of the instability of meaning. Hawkes says: "However, the book can never really be seen in terms of collapse or failure as it offers alternative and Utopian ways of reading the story. It is ultimately, a positive book- a book that reveals the possibilities of America (22). Hawkes does sense the "ironic" level in the work which contains positive and negative trends, but because of the continual movement between the poles of pluses and minuses the overall feeling is not positive but tragic.

East Egg, likewise, in spite of being constructed as the place of fashion, the green light, is deconstructed as it is hot and intolerable "it's far too hot to touch this noon!" (93). It is the place where Myrtle is constantly calling Tom and torturing Daisy. It is the place where Nick is in distress after sensing Daisy's misery: "[I]t seemed to me that the thing for Daisy to do was to rush out to the house, child in arms" (19). All is not well and perfect at East Egg. The final destruction comes when Gatsby stands his night vigil outside Tom's house after Daisy has run Myrtle down anxious for Daisy whom he thinks (is) loyal to him. Tom and Daisy are actually conspiring against Gatsby in the kitchen with a plate of cold fried chicken between them, and

This depiction of the house foreshadows the destruction of Gatsby's dream of the perfect girl and perfect relationship, or figuratively of the American dream of the ability to reach your dream if you work hard enough. When Gatsby's father sees the house and shows the picture Gatsby sent to him, there is another attempt at reconstructing Gatsby and what he stands for. Gatsby's father says how: "Jimmy sent me this picture"…. He pointed out every detail to me eagerly. "Look there!" and then sought admiration from my eyes." (141-2)

The house symbolizes all the potential in Gatsby that is ended. When his father saw the hall of the house for the first time "and saw the height and splendor of the hall and the great rooms opening out from it into other rooms, his grief began to be mixed with aimed pride." (137). This, however; is not enough to reconstruct Gatsby. The final words on the house are "Gatsby's house was still empty when I left — the grass on his lawn had grown as long as mine" (147). Gatsby did not reach his dream or attain the respectability he coveted:

> He had come a long way to this blue lawn; and his dream must have seemed so close that he could hardly fail to grasp it. He did not know that it was already behind him, somewhere back in that vast obscurity beyond the city, where the dark fields of the republic rolled on under the night. (148)

hearkens to be fashionable and please Daisy, but from the beginning his place is talked of as an imitation "of some Hotel de Ville in Normandy" Tom's place is the real thing with its sundials and walks. Gatsby turns his house into a common meeting place in an attempt to show how rich he is and lure Daisy over:

> There was music from my neighbor's house….I watched his guests diving from the tower of his raft,… On week-ends his Rolls-Royce became an omnibus, bearing parties to and from the city….and on Mondays eight servants, including an extra gardener, toiled all day with mops and scrubbing-brushes and hammers and garden-shears, repairing the ravages of the night before. (33)

Gatsby's house is constructed as luxurious, but deconstructed when it is also described as an imitation of a European Hotel. It has also no traditions but is governed by the "rules of behavior associated with an amusement park" (34). The deconstruction is continued when Daisy comes and doesn't approve. All the parties stop and the servants go. The dream of "fashionability," Gatsby's vision of what will please Daisy is destroyed. Gatsby says: "she didn't like it" (90). Then, the lights of Gatsby's house failed to go on and as obscurely as it had begun, his career as Trim al Chio was over" (91-92).

spend their exquisite time. Nevertheless, this place is not perfect. It contains "[T]wo unusual formations of land" (6): East Egg and West Egg. These are not "perfect ovals" but "crushed flat at the contact end". West egg is "the less fashionable" where Gatsby and Nick live. If Gatsby had "a colossal affair", Nick's house was at the very tip of the egg", "an eyesore, but it was a small eyesore". Thus, the West Island is figured as less fashionable and containing stark contradictions of social standards.

The East Egg does contain the "white palaces of fashionable East Egg". It contains Tom and Daisy's place with its "sun-dials and brick walks and burning gardens". It is totally impressive and takes mythical importance as it is the green light which Gatsby yearns for as a sign of perfection:

> The stretched out his arms towards the dark water in a curious way, and far as I was from him, I could have sworn he was trembling. Involuntarily I glanced seaward and distinguished nothing except a single green light, minute and far away, that might have been the end of a dock (20).

Daisy's house can best be described as symbolizing the "sumptuous lifestyle of the wealthy America" with its "sensual images" (Gibb 96).

Gatsby tries to imitate his vision of Daisy's house. West Egg is trying to imitate its vision of East Egg. Gatsby

day; they couldn't make him pay forever" (113). Yet, the tragedy is in the uncertainty in the breaking of the moral hierarchy which the place comes to represent, in the constant reconstruction and deconstruction in the resultant nothingness.

The Great Gatsby like "Babylon Revisited" affords a myriad of deconstructive attitudes. The places, the characters and their relationships are all deconstructed leading to a total tragic effect of the total nothingness of experience. As Derrida reminds us, the nature of "differance . . . which prevents any word, any concept, any major enunciation from coming to summarize and to govern from the theological presence of a center the movement and textual spacing of differences" (1981, 14). Gatsby as well as places and relationships come to embody differance, if embodiment can be understood as the "being-there of an absen[ce]" or the "disjointure in the very presence of the present" (1994, 6; 25). These presences which are shown to be allusive and deconstructive cause the tragic effect of the work.

Long Island and Gatsby's house can be both deconstructed. As in "Babylon Revisited" places come to be embodiments of their inhabitants and the values for which they strive. As the inhabitants and their relationships are built, broken down and rebuilt, the places likewise undergo a similar process. At the beginning of the work, Long Island is constructed as the place of millionaires, where the rich

again. "He was anxious to see Paris by night with clearer and more judicious eyes than those of other days" (96). He goes to the casino and cabarets he is not as impressed as before. He has no urge to squander wealth as he did. He withdraws from the invitations of false entertainment and stresses that "[Y]ou have to be damn drunk" (97) to enjoy that.

Yet, this fortitude is not a moral one. His lament is for how Paris had dissipated to him. The Paris he knew: "[A]ll the catering to vice and waste on an utterly childish scale, and he suddenly realized the meaning of the word "dissipate" — to dissipate into thin air; to make nothing out of something" (97). He remembers the wealth he had given as an offering to destiny, yet he had lost both wife and child. Paris is not enjoyable to him because he is not rich anymore, nor has a family to compensate the loss. The deconstruction of Paris by being a place invaded by irresponsible people and catering to vice has led to nothingness. In the final scene his attempt at reconstructing Paris and seeing it a new and dining in the normal cheap restaurants has totally failed. The old Paris has over-shadowed all "[T]he memory of those days swept over him like a nightmare..." (112). We are left with the deconstructive vision of Paris. It is the Ritz we see in the end empty and eventless, unable to give him what he wants, his daughter. He had "lost everything [he] wanted in the boom" (112). Is there hope that he will be a family man and Paris will be enjoyed by him as it really is? There maybe we are not sure. "He would come back some

Finally, Paris itself is an excellent example of the deconstructive tendencies in the work which lead to the overall tragic tone. Another characteristic of Fitzgerald's fiction is his use of place as symbolic of moral hierarchy. The place comes to symbolize the people living in it and give them moral being. Paris here moves from the place of irresponsible living to meaningful existence according to the characters' response to it. Paris is constructed from the beginning as a place which has lost its magic. The rich have quitted it. This, however, can be a reconstruction as it teaches Charlie that it is him and his previous bad irresponsible behavior which has deconstructed Paris for him. "I spoiled this city for myself. I didn't realize it, but the days came along one after another, and then two years were gone, and everything was gone, and I was gone." (94)

He had deconstructed Paris by not enjoying it as it is but forcing it to cater for his extravagant life. This is a kind of reconstruction of Paris as an entity away from the dreams of millionaires. Thus, Marion is happy in the real constructed Paris with few Americans. She can enjoy it as it really is: "We've suffered like everybody, but on the whole it's a good deal pleasanter" (96). Charlie, however; still prefers the destructed scene when he stresses "But it was nice while it lasted," "We were a sort of royalty, almost infallible, with a sort of magic around us" (96).

However, Charlie as part of his wish to construct a new reformed version of himself wants to reconstruct Paris

memory was "an electric current of agony surg[ing] through him" (105). "The image of Helen haunted him; Helen whom he had loved so until they had senselessly begun to abuse each other's love, tear it into shreds" (106). Thus, Helen is not all purity; she is not a perfect construction; she also is destroyed. She had kissed young Webb at a table. Charlie had tried to take her home. She had hysterically refused. He had locked her out in anger. There was a snow storm. She wondered for hours in slippers and escaped pneumonia but eventually died. Helen is constructed as an irresponsible character.

Yet, she is again revived when she comes to Charlie in a dream, white and soft and she supports him and encourages him to take his child. She is Charlie's idealized vision which remains an unattainable vision. Tragically, she is on a swing, swinging faster, and faster and never stopping. Her voice becomes unclear. She is not a stable reconstruction but changing and ultimate destruction. He had made plans with Helen but Helen had not planned to die. Reconstruction is followed by deconstruction again. Helen may seem as a center which supports Charlie, a center he wants his child to remember, a center he reverts to at the end when "[H]e was absolutely sure Helen wouldn't have waited him to be so alone" (113). Nevertheless, she had run around wild just like him. She is destroyed and the hope of reconstruction at the end is transient and leads to nothingness.

defining them as evil and Charlie as good. Lorraine and Duncan are weak and they follow Charlie not to destroy him, but to gain strength through him. They have been considerate to him in the past. Lorraine has opened her door and given him a drink at 4 o'clock in the morning when he needed it. She just expects him to take care of them as he has always done. She tries to reconstruct her own life around him. Her husband could not come. They are poor; she only has 200$ a month. She seeks support from Charlie whom she assumes is still the old wild Charlie of the past. Thus, Lorraine and Duncan are agents of destruction, but they are also seekers to reconstruct their lives. Their tragedy is in their lack of presence and being. They reach no stable essence and cause a movement of destruction but with a constructive intention.

The character of Helen is another good example of the destructive tendency in the work. It is essential to view this character in which Fitzgerald's mark is overwhelming. Helen is the main female character, the symbol of the American dream, of well-being, of perfection and stability. This is from the point of view of the illusioned hero. She, like her fellow females, is transient, here in this story in her absence. She represents the soul's strife to perfection and belief in total perfect good. She acts as a hierarchy of values by which the characters are judged. Yet, all this is undermined by her absence. Helen first appears as an image, a ghost, haunting Charlie and tearing their love into shreds (103). Marion accuses him of causing Helen's death and the

reader as a totally responsible behavior. The centre has been broken and the scale is in constant motion. She is not right in hating Charlie, however; right she claims to be, nor is Charlie totally right and sure of eluding this seemingly inevitable failure. The tragedy is in the unending collapse and nothingness, the deconstructive inability to give a stable moral evaluation of any character which results in a total lack of belief in moral hierarchies.

Lorraine and Duncan are another example of the destructive tendency which causes the tragic sense in the short story. They represent the destructive ghosts who come and foil all Charlie's attempts of reconstruction. They act the double role of giving Charles a positive moral attitude as well as acting as the supplements of Charles's endeavors at presence. Lorraine first comes in with Duncan when Charlie is dining with his daughter. They are evil ghosts from the past who have come to destroy the values he wants to hold in the future. He eludes them and there is hope that he will get rid of them and construct his own future.

Yet Charlie can not reconstruct his future away from them. When he goes to claim his daughter, again they barge in. They remind him of his madness, his attraction to Lorraine, his drinking. They are offended that he shuts them out. They break down and destroy his image as a responsible father. Thus, they seem agents of destruction, yet they, too, like Marion, have an opposite side. The tragic deconstructive attitude encompasses them and defers

stormy night. But she also has many personal reasons for her hate. Lincoln explains later how:

> [T]here's another thing" Lincoln hesitated. "while you and Helen were tearing around Europe throwing money away, we were just getting along, I didn't touch any of the prosperity because I never got ahead enough to carry anything but my insurance. I think Marion felt there was some kind of injustice in it you not even working toward the end, and getting richer and richer. (107)

Thus, the centre of values which judges Charlie has fallen and is deconstructed. Marion becomes a supplement not a centre and possesses a personal hidden motivation for her rejection of and sickness at Charlie and what he represents. All this is the result of personal suffering not moral judgment alone.

At the end, when Marion is again reconstructed holding her two children and Lincoln swinging Honoria on his leg in a show of protectiveness in the face of Lorraine and Duncan's invasion which brought irresponsibility and madness to this domestic scene. We do not feel that she is totally reconstructed and stable. Her sickness at the sight of Lorraine and Duncan and her changing her mind to giving Honoria back to her father as a result is not accepted by the

like Helen and Honoria but complex foils like Marion and Lorraine.

Marion is first reconstructed as the perfect mother and holder of family values; she is waiting in the salon in a warm intimate scene with her family. She seems to symbolize the presence and hierarchical family Charles is striving to achieve. She "distrusts" Charlie and what he stands for. She is happy. Paris is empty of rich Americans and she can now be treated as a normal, being not a millionaire. She catches Charlie's mistake that he went to a bar and doubts he will remain sober. She disliked him and was cold to him as an irresponsible human. But this "aggressiveness gave him an advantage" (96). There must be a selfish reason for it and he just had to wait till he gained acceptance. Thus, Marion with all her stability and confidence in her ability to give Honoria a good life after being asked by her dying sister Helen to look out for Honoria, cannot prevent Charlie from proving his point and sees his "argument" (104). This presence is changing into a supplement.

Lincoln explains and deconstructs Marion's character and values stating that her resentment of Charlie is because of her own circumstances: "[S]he had built up all her fear of life into a wall and faced it toward him" (104). Her snap at his swearing may have been "the result of some trouble with the cook served hours before" (104). She cannot forget that he locked Helen out in a night gown and slippers on a

deconstruction is beginning. Marion and Lincoln are watchful parents, giving medicine and support. Marion pulls her arm about her children's back to protect them from Lorraine and Duncan, and Lincoln swings Honoria on his leg (111).

Charlie is shut out. The children are sent to eat alone and Charlie can only say softly: "Good night children" "Good night sweetheart." Like the innocent Ophelia who this quote reminds us of before she proceeds to tragically kill herself; Honoria is lost. In return to her hug, he cannot return the protection and reassurance he promises after his past has taken over the situation and Lorraine and Duncan have made Marion change her mind. Honoria and her future are deconstructed till further notice and tragically there is no stability for him and her together. The tragedy here is not in the fall but in the constant replacement of opposite poles of protection, and being with loss and plurality. As Monteiro puts it, Honoria, like Babylon, has "fallen capture to Lincoln and Marion Peters" (Monteiro 496).

Marion who seems to provide the stable state against which Charlie's hopes are deconstructed is herself a victim of deconstruction. Marion traditionally has been seen as the moral being who acts as the foil for Charles's corruption. She, however, is not totally moral and disinterested in her judgment of Charles. Fitzgerald, here, reveals the richness of his female characters. They are not just idealized symbols

character be an attainable centre? Will Honoria be given to him to fulfill his dream and give her a character? Will all this be deconstructed? By the end we are tragically not sure. No centre is stable. Plurality takes over unity.

Charlie takes the girl to dinner, gives her vegetables, promises her presents. She reveals how mature she is when she refuses the toy saying that they are now not as rich as they were, constructive in a sense of responsible behavior, but deconstructive as a reminder that Marion and Lincoln are the ones who are building her character and motivating her actions, not her father who is really as rich as he ever was. Charlie's hope to be both parents is undermined; he is doomed not to know what she likes to eat. Honoria is known to Lincoln, Marion and her cousins more than to him. Charlie knows that it "was hopeless to try to know her in so short a time" (106). He watches her, tells her not to forget her mother, wants to give her love and leave her "warm and glowing" (101) and put in her a little of himself before she is crystallized. All this is outside Lincoln's house. Inside, Charlie's hopes are deconstructed. He is alarmed at having to leave Honoria in an atmosphere of hostility to himself. She would learn to distrust him and feel his money was bad and offensive (104).

Charlie reconstructs his relation with Honoria and like a responsible father goes to claim her. Honoria shows tact in concealing excessive joy that her Dad is taking her. When he leaves and returns in the hope of fulfilling his hopes, the

hope that reconstruction is on the way as "Helen wouldn't have wanted him to be so alone" (113). The tragedy is not in his fall but in the lack of stability, the constant absence of the presence of being, the constant interchange of presence and supplement, the constant deconstruction and the nothingness felt as a result.

We can also view this tendency towards deconstruction in Honoria's character and her relation with her father. She, like other Fitzgerald female characters, is idealized into a perfect being whose regaining symbolizes unity, identity, and totalizing systems which are consequently tragically deconstructed into plurality, difference and skepticism about absolute or totalizing systems to use Michael Ryan's terminology in *Marxism and Deconstruction* (quoted in Selden 89). Honoria is first constructed as a warm accomplished nine year old. She "pulled his head around by one ear and set her cheek against his" (94). She is well and healthy and has needed no doctor for a while (96). Honoria seems to be a centre bringing him and Helen together:

> At dinner he couldn't decide whether Honoria was most like him or her mother. Fortunate if she didn't combine the traits of both that had brought them to disaster (96).

The seeds of deconstruction are in her. However "protective" (96) Charles feels, can he save her? He wanted to give her a character: "trust in character again as the eternal valuable element. Everything wore out" (96). Can

and gain her acceptance and blessing. She represents his being and he idealizes her into a perfectly moral essence by which he judges his behavior. However, the germ of deconstruction is still present as Helen swings faster and her friendly talk seems more and more distant and unclear. He may plan for Honoria; he wanted "the tangible, visible child" and would wait another year for the legal guardianship, but deconstruction is on its way. Lorraine sends a message and has found him out and wants to meet him, reminds him of his previous passion and madness. His state then was "of dissipation at that condition of utter irresponsibility" (108). The ghost will not let him go.

Thus, when he goes to Marion to claim Honoria and has a warm drink by the fire, the fact is stressed that family quarrels have no center and are destructive like 'splits in the skin' (103) that will never heal because there is not enough material in the centre. There can be no stability. This simile used by the narrator is an exact definition of the tragedy of deconstruction. Duncan and Lorraine barge in "hilarious" and Charlie is "astounded". All falls apart. Honoria is sent out to eat with the children and Marion falls ill. Charlie can only say good bye softly and rush to the Ritz to find Lorraine and Duncan; "[T]here was nothing he could do" (112). He takes his drink as he didn't touch the one at Lincoln's and braces himself when Lincoln tells him to wait another six months. "There wasn't much he could do now except send Honoria some things" (113). The work ends with the destruction of his hope for a stable life but with a

chooses "some vegetables" (98). "He must be both parents to her and not shut any of her out of communication" (99). He introduces himself to her and seems to be gaining his rights as a father. Just then Lorraine and Duncan Schaeffer, the "ghost" (99) from the past, reappear. They may seem to be building and strengthening Charlie with the fact that "they wanted to see him, because he was stronger than they were now, because they wanted to draw certain sustenance from his strength" (100). Nevertheless, they pull him back to who he was- old attractions, old habits, and ignoble behavior, unsuitable for a responsible family man.

In part three when Marion interviews him to decide whether to give him back his daughter we are reminded that he had collapsed in a sanitarium (103). We are reminded of his mistreatment of Helen and Marion's doubt that he will ever stop drinking. With all this collapse, there seems to be no hope of reconstruction but because Charlie learned to "modulate his inevitable resentment to the chastened attitude of the reformed sinner" (103); he is reconstructed and Marion cannot refuse to give him back his child. Lincoln stresses that it is "going to be all right. I think she sees now that you can provide for the child, and so we can't very well stand in your way or Honoria's way" (106).

Helen comes to him in a soft white light, glad and happy and supporting and friendly (106). Here we have a double female character. Charles is not only seeking to regain Honoria but to regain Helen whom he seeks to please

He seems responsible enough to regain his child and build a stable home.

After this construction, yet again he is deconstructed. His love of living like royalty and being rich and possessing magical solutions is stressed. These are the "supplements" of Derrida (1976). His irresponsible previous behavior in which he had squandered his wealth comes back to him, "It hadn't been given for nothing" (97). He reasons that he gave it "as an offering to destiny" (97) to forget his deconstruction - "his child taken from his control, his wife escaped to a grave in Vermont" (97) - total deconstruction with all his wealth and good intentions. Thus, as Selden stresses:

> There are many critical and theological strategies which can sort out this mess, but there remains a basis for deconstruction. Such a reading begins by noting the hierarchy, proceeds to reverse it, and finally resists the assertion of a new hierarchy by displacing the second term from a position of superiority too. (87)

This is the method this study is trying to implement to reveal the tragic sense which arises from the continual building and breaking of hierarchies.

As part two begins Charlie is again reconstructed. His being as presence is again built with all the connotations of well-being and stability."[T]he depression of yesterday was gone" (98). He takes his daughter out to eat and responsibly

constantly moving on a scale of values from construction to deconstruction.

Like most of Fitzgerald's characters, Charles's well-being is linked to regaining a beloved female. The females come to symbolize virtuous living. The heroes strive to regain these females who represent to them perfection which is more in the mind of the hero than an actual attribute of these very humanly tainted females. Nevertheless, the hero's moral being and success and well-being are judged by the extent to which the hero is able to regain his girl. The females can also represent the idealized vision of the American dream which the hero tries to regain and save after the economic collapse. Charles is again reconstructed as his daughter seeks him, kisses him and gives him confidence. Although: "Charlie did not relax, his heart sat up rigidly in his body and he drew confidence from his daughter, who from time to time came close to him, holding in her arms the doll he had brought." (95)

Charlie's virtuous living, or "being as presence" in Derrida's terminology (1966) is clear when he is described as now doing good, getting rich again, even more than before. He stops boasting not to hurt his Lincoln and considerately shares in Lincoln's pride of his children. Charlie rejects the cocktail stressing how he only takes one drink a day. He plans for his daughter, how he will get her a nanny, get his sister over and build his daughter's character.

Charles Wales is first introduced as the agent of good, a reformed drinker, "I'm going slow these days" (93). He is working in Prague where "[T]hey don't know about (him) down there" (93). He regrets not dining at a really cheap restaurant in Paris (94) and enjoying it as it really is not as it shows itself to foreigners. He seems now sound in judgment and intention. He is described as thirty-five, good to look at and having Irish mobility in his face. Thus, he is being reconstructed. As Eby puts it "his errors have brought him a new awareness" (Eby 176). This may seem as the noble view of the tragic hero who represents the reformed American who, like America itself, wakes from the terrible nightmare of the collapse of the economy to diligently come back stronger than before. Moreover, Charles (also) here represents the reformed moral American who has become aware how his irresponsible squander of wealth has led to a national collapse in economy and in the personal life of the wealthy.

Once we reach this seemingly stable character which has great potential of being a responsible human, the character is deconstructed as fast as it was reconstructed (Doyle AAT 8102 314). Charlie has a wrinkle between his eyes (94). It deepens and pulls down his brow spoiling his good-looking face. He feels a "cramp sensation in his belly" (94) as he rings his brother-in-law's door bell. He is not so stable; he can crumble any moment. This is what causes the tragic sense. There is neither norm nor stability. We are

a "centre" of meaning to guarantee being as presence. Western thought has developed terms as being, essence, and consciousness. Derrida refuses these centers and refuses to think outside them. All we can do is refuse to allow either poles in a system to become the centre and guarantor of presence. This is picked up by many American critics who stress how deconstruction occurs when the presence sought for is always unattainable in the past, or in the future. Hence, this paper derives its sense of postmodern tragedy. The tragic sense in many works as "Babylon Revisited" and *The Great Gatsby* is not due to reversal of fortune, presupposing a fixed centre of consciousness, judgment and evaluation, but the lack of any centre; the continual deconstructive reconstructive swing between two poles when dealing with all aspects in the works. It is this lack of a centre which generates the tragic effect of the works.

The deconstructive aspect is very clear in "Babylon Revisited." Charles as a character is constructed and deconstructed many times throughout the tale. The tragedy is not in his fall from an ordered perfection which presupposes order and value in the universe, but the tragedy is in the inability to find any order, the deconstruction of all perfection and value, the nothingness of experience. This tragic deconstruction can be seen in Charles's character, in his relation with Honoria and the other children, in the characters of Marion Lincoln, Lorraine, Helen and in Paris itself, past and present.

political situations and studies of it are resurrected just as Gibb and Runner respectively stress how Gatsby is a man of our times and gives us hope to strive. *The Great Gatsby* has been studied in the postmodern age from many serious approaches. Some critics concentrate on the idea of race and class as Jonathan N. Barron in "Teaching Regionalism and class in *The Great Gatsby*" (59). Others like Ted Billy choose to concentrate on point of view and what he terms myopic vision in "Look Here, You see" in *The Great Gatsby* (157-59). Others study this novel using New Historicism like Stephen Brauer (84-87) while Peter L. Hays prefers to study *The Great Gatsby* from the moral point of view (169-74). Some still study *The Great Gatsby's* structure like Heidi M. Kunz (121-23) and others like Kim Moreland study it as a cultural work (94). James Phelon concentrates on Nick as a narrator and gives a study on the rhetoric of the work(101-05). Jeffrey Steinbrink prefers to study the Myth of Renewal as seen in *The Great Gatsby* (95). All these prove how the work lends itself to postmodern approaches.

Closer to this study however, is Benjamin Scherier's "The Power of Negative Thinking: Cynicism and The History of Modern American Literature." Yet, he, however, only concentrates on the deconstructive aspects in the work and neglects the reconstructive ones. He traces the cynicism but not the tragic deconstruction and lack of centres. In 1966, Jacques Derrida initiated the movement of deconstruction. He stressed how western philosophy since Plato had been put into question. Structuralism presupposes

which seems always unfinished because of human weakness. The problem is that tragedy, like realistic fiction, presupposes an absolute truth which when violated causes a tragic downfall. As Lakey Hess puts it, tragic and realistic fiction are seen as providing "truth" (Lakey Hess 354). This is in conflict with the postmodern criteria that existence is void of absolute truth and has multiple meanings.

Tanfer Emin Tunc, however, in 2009, like Booker and Taylor, still sees the work as an example of the tragedy of the American dream on Long Island's Gold Coast (74). The problem with this sense of tragedy is that it presupposes fixed norms by which to judge whether one is noble, or ignoble, moral, or immoral, hero or villain. Once the noble, moral hero falls and is treated as ignoble, immoral villain the tragedy is complete. In a postmodern age where reader's responses break down the text, this sense of stable norms is broken. The noble and ignoble are interchangeable as one character is in continual motion on a scale from one extreme to the other. The tragedy is not in the fall from high to low, but the lack of a centre of reference, a stable norm by which to judge the high and low. The change of the scale from vertical to horizontal and from stable between two stops to continually moving from right to left is the real postmodern tragedy and comes from the lack of centers, the instability and the perpetual movement.

Some Postmodern critics see *The Great Gatsby* especially as mirroring twenty-first century social and

characters, places and relationships. These characters, places and relationships come to embody positive qualities of hope, achievement, true love, sacrifice, responsibility, and well-being; then they are deconstructed and shown to also validly embody despair, loss, hate, selfishness, irresponsibility and deterioration. Thus, the constructions are then deconstructed and never remain in place giving the tragic sense of the transience of construction but not the impossibility of reconstruction. There is always hope that the cycle will lead to another construction.

The study will begin with a quick mention of the traditional view of tragedy in *The Great Gatsby* and "Babylon Revisited." It will then proceed to a survey of the postmodern studies on the works which reveal how they are suited to postmodern analysis. This will be followed by a concise definition of deconstruction and its contribution to understanding the tragic sense. Finally, the study will end with an analysis of "Babylon Revisited" and *The Great Gatsby* from a postmodern point of view in an attempt to give a definition of tragedy in a postmodern age.

Many critics, like Booker and Taylor, still view Fitzgerald's fiction as tragic. Booker calls it as revealing the death of the American dream (41) while Taylor calls it "the unfinished American epic" (5). They both see Fitzgerald as an example of how people with potential can spoil their lives by following a flaw in their character and as thus casting doubt to the validity of the American dream itself

F. Scott Fitzgerald has been considered as a tragic writer recording the collapse of the American dream in novels and short stories like *The Great Gatsby* and "Babylon Revisited". Many critics have dealt with the attractive allusive heroes full of potential who through a flaw in character, or judgment, cause the collapse of their perfect worlds. *The Great Gatsby*, the tale of James Gatz who changes his name to Jay Gatsby and works himself up from a penniless runaway to an extremely wealthy gentleman through illegal means in order to achieve his utopian dream of marrying Daisy, his dream girl, has been seen as the embodiment of the American dream of achieving your goals and aspirations whoever you are and wherever you come from once you work devotedly for it and believe in America. Charles Wales' tale in "Babylon Revisited" is another example of a reformed wealthy parent who tries to regain his money, his honor and his daughter. Gatsby's failure to regain Daisy and Charles's to regain Honoria have been seen as perfect examples of tragic fall due to a flaw in character.

This study agrees with the critics on the tragic sense prevalent in *The Great Gatsby* and "Babylon Revisited"; however, it attempts at redefining the nature of tragedy to fit the postmodern age. The tragedy in *The Great Gatsby* and "Babylon Revisited" can be seen as a result of the deconstructive aspect of the two works, not of the fall of a hero from nobility to ignobility through a flaw in character. Both works are seen as attempts to build and reconstruct

Tragic Sense in Fitzgerald's *The Great Gatsby* and "Babylon Revisited"

Dr. Turki Saleem Althubaiti(*)

Abstract

In 1966, Jacques Derrida initiated the movement of deconstruction. He stressed how western philosophy since Plato had been put into question. Structuralism presupposes a "centre" of meaning to guarantee being as presence. Western thought has developed terms as being, essence, and consciousness. Derrida refuses these centers and refuses to think outside them. All we can do is refuse to allow either poles in a system to become the centre and guarantor of presence. This is picked up by many American critics who stress how deconstruction occurs when the presence sought for is always unattainable in the past, or in the future. Hence, this paper derives its sense of postmodern tragedy. The tragic sense in many works as "Babylon Revisited" and *The Great Gatsby* is not due to reversal of fortune, presupposing a fixed centre of consciousness, judgment and evaluation, but the lack of any centre; the continual deconstructive reconstructive swing between two poles when dealing with all aspects in the works. It is this lack of a centre which generates the tragic effect of the works.

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